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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY.

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AMERICAN BREEDS OF FOWLS.

II.—THE WYANDOTTE.

BY

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY,
Washington, D. C., September 3, 1901.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for publication a bulletin on the Wyandotte breed of fowls, being the second part of a report on "American breeds of fowls."

The Wyandotte, like the Plymouth Rock, is a general-purpose breed, and has the same qualities to recommend it. The differences between these two breeds, except in feather, are not many nor great. The Wyandotte is somewhat smaller, lays eggs which average smaller, and is perhaps a trifle more difficult to breed to standard requirements. On the other hand, its meat has a finer grain, it is hardier and more active, and its more numerous varieties give a greater range for the fancier to exercise his taste in selection. When carefully bred, both are splendid fowls and are worthy of every effort to maintain them at the point of greatest excellence. The complicated uniform and beautiful markings seen on the plumage of some varieties of Wyandottes excite unbounded admiration, and demonstrate the perfection to which the fancier's art has attained.

There are no better general-purpose fowls than the Plymouth Rocks and Wyandottes. The choice between the two must depend upon the taste of the breeder. Both should be better known, more widely distributed, and more carefully bred for utility qualities. In the production of table fowls of all kinds—broilers, roasters, and capons—they are unsurpassed, and in egg production they are capable of equaling the most prolific of the smaller breeds.

Respectfully,

D. E. SALMON,
Chief of Bureau.

Hon. JAMES WILSON,
Secretary.

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AMERICAN BREEDS OF FOWLS.

THE WYANDOTTE.

THE ORIGINAL WYANDOTTE.

The Wyandotte was for years, before it reached its present perfected state, without a name. Its presence was far from attractive, and its average quality was hardly the equal of the common barnyard fowl. So far as the writer remembers the first Wyandottes were called "Sebright Cochins." The result of investigation was convincing that the Sebright Cochin was the product of the union of a Sebright Bantam and a yellow hen, which might have been a Cochin. Such crosses were termed "mongrels." While there was little attention paid to them prior to 1870, immediately after that year they began to attract some public notice, and mention was made of them in a few of the stock papers of New York State.

A later investigation has shown that several parties, in the same section of the country, made an effort to produce the Sebright Cochin by crossing the Sebright with the Cochin. This fact is known from letters which passed between those who made the experiment and who interchanged stock, the letters having been presented for publication. The result of the first accidental cross no doubt prompted others to try the experiment. Consequently the original foundation of what are now called Wyandottes came as an accidental product of an unusual union.

THE ACCEPTED THEORY.

The theory of their origin, as accepted by those claiming to be authority, is as follows: A Mr. John P. Ray, of Hemlock, N. Y., originated a rose-comb fowl by a cross of a Sebright Bantam male and a yellow "Chitagong," which he named Sebright Cochins.

Others who became interested (among whom were the Rev. A. S. Baker and Mr. Benson) produced the same kind of fowl. These three gentlemen became so interested with their newly formed fowls that one of them had them illustrated in the agricultural press during 1872. As a result of the publication of such illustrations, these fowls were spread over the country into several States, and were advertised in the columns of poultry journals soon after. Thus, by unguided crosses, was the foundation of this wonderful breed begun. Some

carefully planned crosses soon followed, and the able breeder began the labor of molding them into a set type, or form, and of clothing them in a plumage that should be distinctly laced about the edge.

THE WORK OF COMPLETION.

To produce the Wyandotte was no inconsiderable task. To bring the solid buff of the original cross into a white center with black lacing was hardly conceived of in the start, as is proved by the methods employed later. Both Silver Spangled Hamburgs and Dark Brahmas were crossed upon the Sebright Cochin; Silver Spangled Hamburgs and Buff Cochins were bred together; and the best of all these crosses merged into what were called Eurekas; also Excelsiors, Ambrights, American Sebrights, Columbias, etc. While all these many names were applied, as seemed to please the fancy of those working on their advancement, the majority of the fanciers had about concluded to call them American Sebrights, and the managers of the American Poultry Association, at their meeting of 1876, were asked to accept them under this name. Fortunately for the breed, their admission was refused. This spurred their admirers to more extended efforts, and so, when the time of their recognition came (1883), they were a much improved breed.

THE NAME SELECTED.

The name Wyandotte was proposed by Mr. Houdlette, at Worcester, Mass., in 1883, and accepted as the future name for the fowl. A general dissatisfaction was shown all over the country at this choice as a name, but those who made the decision should be praised now for their fortunate selection. Time has proven it a most appropriate name, and no one could wish to have it changed.

Since the one original Wyandotte was named, the multiplication of varieties has made distinguishing titles necessary. We now have, as listed in the Standard, the Silver-Laced, Golden-Laced, White, Buff, Black, and Golden-Penciled, or Partridge, varieties. In addition to these we have the following new ones claiming admission: The Silver-Penciled, the Buff-Laced, and the Columbian. In England they have, besides these, a Wyandotte called the Cuckoo Wyandotte. All of these varieties will be mentioned in turn.

EARLY TYPE AND COLOR.

The original type of the Wyandotte was the Asiatic, and at the time of origin the Standard favored the Cochin type more than any other. If it were possible to establish these individualities of form or "breed characteristics" in the minds of all our poultry people, it would result in our having in our poultry as striking a resemblance of form as we have in our sheep, cattle, and horses. As far as the eye can reach, it

is possible to distinguish a flock of Merino sheep from any other breed; the same is true of cattle and horses. The breed characteristics are no stronger in these animals than they should be in fowls.

When the Wyandottes were admitted as a breed to a position among our Standard-bred fowls they had reached a form and color which were quite distinctive. The males favored the Dark Brahma in form and color, the body color being quite like a well-splashed Dark Brahma. They had smooth legs of a smoky-yellow shade and the rose comb. The females, in form, favored our present Silver-Spangled Hamburg females. In color and markings they were quite crude. Some had grayish white breasts and backs, while others had breasts of white ticked with a darker color and backs mossed with the gray of the Dark Brahma.

A better description would be that they resembled half-sized Dark Brahmas of very inferior color and having Hamburg combs and smooth shanks. In many cases the breast feathers of the male were black, with a white stripe through the center a little larger than the shaft of the feather. The back color of the male was mixed black and brown, while in the female it was mossed quite like the marking of a very inferior Dark Brahma. Such was the original Wyandotte of this now much-valued breed.

ITS RISE AND FALL.

There was an increasing demand for Wyandottes throughout the United States. Anything that resembled their description was sent forth to fill the demand, and much inferior stock was spread about under the name of Wyandotte. The result of such distribution was of temporary injury to the advancement of the breed. Then came the good results obtained by the skillful handling by expert breeders, and the several varieties of Wyandottes were placed in their present well-deserved position.

Soon after the original Wyandotte there came the Golden strain, the advent of which made it necessary to select a distinguishing name for the other; thus we have for the two varieties the names Silver-Laced Wyandottes and Golden-Laced Wyandottes.

Conditions of form and color have changed from time to time. In the Silvers we had the very dark, heavy marking which almost destroyed the top color of the males and reduced the white center in the plumage of the female (also on the breast of the male) to almost a stripe or small spot. But in the Golden a continued effort was made to preserve clear top color in the males and the open center of plumage in both male and female. At the present the open center, edged about like the plumage of a well-marked Sebright Bantam, is desirable. Some beautiful specimens of this type have been produced.

THE MODERN WYANDOTTE.

All Wyandottes, no matter what color they may be, must have the same true Wyandotte shape. The demands of the Standard are positive on this point, and this rule should be enforced to the fullest extent. Every breed should be compelled to conform absolutely to the rule that "shape makes the breed, while color designates the variety." Color simply fills the minor position of being a variety emblem, while true shape settles beyond cavil the breed to which a specimen belongs. Therefore, in following the descriptions of the several varieties of the Wyandotte, the one true form must not be lost sight of. The American family, or breeds, of fowls are divided into three distinct types—the long, or extended, type, belonging to the Java; the medium formation of the Plymouth Rock, and the close, compact form of the Wyandotte. All these are shape distinctions, which, if followed to the letter of the rule in each, would result in far more beautiful fowls in all varieties than can be while one variety encroaches upon the special characteristics of the other.

STANDARD FORM.

The head of the Wyandotte, as viewed from the side, should be rather round; broad across the skull, like the Brahma head, but not full or prominent over the eyes; it should round off in the rear to the juncture with the neck, and should have a low-set rose comb (the comb of the female should be much smaller than that of the male) oval on top, from front to rear—often spoken of as a "rocker comb." The surface of the comb must be perfect—nice even points all over. Deep corrugations or irregularities are undesirable. The spike at the end of the comb must be quite distinct, but not so long as in the Hamburg. It should turn downward at the end, or point. In fact, the whole comb from front to rear should conform to the shape of the head. Large or oversized combs must be avoided.

The neck should be short and gracefully arched—that of the female rather shorter than that of the male. The hackle of the male should be long, flowing, and quite abundant, giving the very full appearance at shoulders. If the neck inclines slightly forward it adds to the finish of both head and neck. A long, slim neck, head, or back detracts very much from the good appearance of a specimen.

The description of back, breast, body, and fluff will be here combined, instead of considering each separately. The whole contour of the Wyandotte is short and compact, with a tendency to cushion and fluff. The back of both male and female must be short, broad, and flat at the shoulders; the saddle of the male broad, full, and prominent, or, as worded in the Standard, "broad, full, and rising, with a concave sweep to the tail," thus forming a back quite similar to the back of the Brahma, while the same section of the female should be slightly

cushioned. The difference, as here set forth, between the Plymouth Rock and the Wyandotte should be noted. The male of the former must have a back with a slight concave sweep to the tail, while the latter must have the full concave sweep. The female Plymouth Rock has the slight concave sweep, while the Wyandotte female must be slightly cushioned. These are distinctions that all can readily grasp and may be remembered as a guide to proper form. In addition to this the Wyandotte has a full-feathered, well-rounded fluff, while on the Plymouth Rock only a moderately full fluff is demanded. To further illustrate the tendency to Cochin form, it may be stated that the breast of the Wyandotte, when fully up to Standard demand, is broad, deep, and fully developed in both male and female. The whole



FIG. 1.—Head of Wyandotte male.

description of the complete body demands the close, compact formation that is the distinguishing feature of the breed.

The sections of neck, back, body, thighs, and shanks are all described as being short, while the same sections of the Plymouth Rock are described as being medium in length; or, in other words, all these sections must be shorter and more compact in the Wyandotte than in the Plymouth Rock. No one should be misled by these descriptions, but unfortunately the entries in these classes at our exhibitions go to prove that many who claim fully to understand these breeds do not conform to the demands in their selection of specimens for exhibition, and it is too often that we see several forms among specimens which are shown by the same exhibitor.

The tail of the Wyandotte is quite like the tail of the Brahma in form. The main tail feathers should be well spread at base, carried so as to complete the proper formation of back, and not cause breaks, or angles. The thigh should be short, stout, well spread, and completely covered with soft plumage; shanks rather short and stout and set well apart, and should be perfectly smooth and free from all appearance of down or feathers. Any tendency to a narrowness between the legs or shanks is an ugly deformity which should be discouraged.

THE UTILITY QUALITIES OF THE WYANDOTTE.

It is claimed that the unusual combination of so many breeds in the make-up of the Wyandotte causes it to produce eggs of uncertain shape and size. If this contention is true, why is not the same true with all crossbred (or made breeds) fowls? Whether this is a fact or not, only careful observation will determine. It is a well-established fact that the egg production of fowls can be improved in both number and size if attention is given to the selection of breeding hens. Only those that lay the greater number of the larger size eggs should be selected.

If the greatest attention is paid to inbreeding for form and color, the number and size of eggs produced by each hen will grow gradually fewer and smaller, while, if the whole purpose is toward more and larger eggs, that result will be obtained, and form and color will gradually decline. The Wyandotte, having been for years the favorite as an exhibition fowl, it may be possible that some of the most extreme line-bred strains have suffered in number and size of eggs, but this fact has no bearing upon the average utility flocks that are kept for producing table eggs.

All records place the Wyandotte about the equal of the Plymouth Rocks in egg qualities, although the Plymouth Rock is credited with an average of somewhat larger eggs, perhaps justly so; but eggs are sold by the dozen, and an ounce or two in a dozen counts for little. The value is in the number produced. At the same time, the larger egg is more attractive, and it is well to give attention to increasing the size.

No fowl can surpass the Wyandotte for market poultry. At any time of its existence, from the small broiler to the roasting fowl, it is always plump and attractive. The close, compact body, the plump breast and rich color of meat and skin give it many advantages over others. It looks better than the long, lanky type of fowls, even when in inferior condition.

THE SILVER-LACED WYANDOTTE.

The color and markings of the Silver Wyandotte, when in perfection, are most attractive. The many difficulties encountered in their



SILVER LACED WYANDOTTE MALE.



SILVER LACED WYANDOTTE FEMALE.

production in anything like Standard color demands have withheld them from public favor. As the male and female differ so widely in color and markings, a full description of each is given. The head plumage of male should be silvery white with a black stripe in the feathers. The neck plumage should be silvery white with a clear black stripe down the middle of each feather, tapering to a fine point, which ends near the extremity of the feather. This black stripe must be completely surrounded with white, entirely clear from any discoloration. The shaft of the feathers may be white. The back and wing bows—in fact, the whole top color—must be clear silvery white, free from all foreign color. The saddle feathers must be striped like the neck or hackle plumage, and, in addition to this, they should have

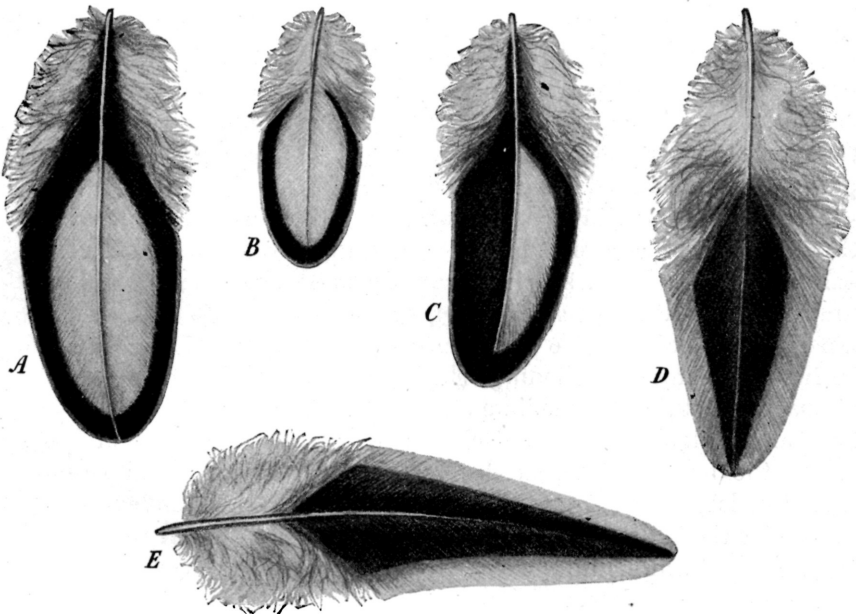


FIG. 2.—Feathers of Silver-Laced Wyandotte. *A*, wing feather, female; *B*, breast feather; *C*, wing covert; *D*, hackle, female; *E*, hackle, male.

in the widest portion of the feather an extended diamond-shaped center of white. The whole top color, including neck, must be of silvery white, entirely free from any foreign color. The presence of a tinging of black or brown on the edging of the feathers casts an unattractive dark appearance over the back; in fact, this is one of the most prevalent color imperfections.

The breast plumage and web of feather is described as follows in the Standard: “Web of feather black with a large white center that tapers to a point.” An effort is being made, however, for a large, full white center, simply edged about with black, like the plumage of the Sebright Bantam, the white to be as clear as possible, and the black to

be as lustrous as can be produced. This style of marking should extend, so far as it can be obtained, under the body and along the thighs. The remainder of the body plumage should be black with a narrow center of white; fluff, dark slate, powdered with gray; the entire undercolor dark slate. Primaries should be black, lower portion of feather edged with white; secondaries black, lower half of feathers white; wing coverts, upper web black, lower web white edged with black, widening at the tip, forming the double bar across the wing. Tail glossy black; the lesser coverts black, edged with white. The combination of colors of wing gives the beautiful wing bow, the double bar of laced feathers across the wing, and the partially laced bay which is hid away under the saddle plumage.

This gives in the male the top color of the Dark Brahma, including the well-furnished, rich glossy black tail. The beauty of color depends largely upon the purity of the shade. When disfigured with black or brown shading, the beauty is destroyed. The presence of perfect wing bars and bay gives a finish that adds greatly to appearance. When the true top color is well backed up by good breast and body, it completes the true-colored Silver-Laced Wyandotte.

The female has the appearance of having the same style of marking throughout, while there is, in fact, considerable variation, as described below. Our Standard specifies that she must have the clear silvery gray color for head; neck plumage, silvery white, with a black stripe tapering to a point. The white must entirely surround the black and be free from any dark shading; shaft of feather, white; color of back plumage, black, with a medium-size white center, the white to be free from any dark shading, the black a rich lustrous color; web of feathers of the breast, white, laced about with black. The white center should be large and pure in color; the black lacing quite even, and to run under the body and gradually grade into solid black, with a narrow stripe of white; fluff, dark slate, powdered with gray; undercolor throughout, dark slate.

Wing primaries black, lower outer web edged with white; secondaries black with lower or outer half of lower web white; web of wing and shoulder coverts white, heavily laced with black, the black lacing growing wider over the wing bow; tail black; greater coverts black; lesser coverts black with narrow white centers; thighs black or black powdered with gray.

Beak of both male and female dark horn color, shading to yellow at the point; shanks and toes bright yellow; eyes bright bay; ear lobes bright red, free from all discoloration.

While the above describes the color and markings of the female, the present tendency is toward the very open center and the narrow black lacing, like the plumage of the Sebright. A few specimens of this character are seen with almost pure white with bright lustrous black

lacing. The real beauty of the female depends upon the clearness of color, being entirely free from all tendency to dark shading in the white or white edging on the black.

MATINGS TO PRODUCE SILVER-LACED WYANDOTTES.

The first requisite of good results from any mating is perfection of form and breed characteristics in both male and female. It is almost an absolute certainty that poor specimens will produce of their kind; the most advanced quality only must be used as breeding stock. Great care must be exercised in the selection of specimens that are very strong in comb qualities, shape of head, and the parts belonging to it. The specimens selected must have bright, well-formed eyes of the true bay color. No two features count more in favor of or against a Wyandotte than comb and eyes. The very best quality in these adds much to their good appearance.

Next in importance to good form is size, which should be encouraged so far as is allowable within the limit of maintaining true form. Oversize detracts from the Wyandotte shape; undersize counts against their value. For this reason it is best to have as much size as can be maintained with the best possible breed characteristics. So far as possible, good large-sized females should be used; it must be borne in mind that size comes largely from the female, while the male has the greater influence for color and head properties. For this reason, males with poor combs and bad color, as well as all small or undersized females, should be discarded from breeding stock.

The top color of the male should be very clear and true and as pure and silvery white as it is possible to obtain. The striping of hackle and saddle should be clear and free from dark edging; breast plumage darker than is demanded in the offspring; the white center not to cover more than one-half the feather, and the edging rich glossy black; tail of the richest metallic black, with no trace of mousing in any part of plumage. If good open lacing is hoped for in the pullets, the male must have the white diamond center in saddle plumage and no trace of bad color on back.

The females should have most perfect open lacing. If they are so finely laced as to have simply a narrow black band around each feather, so much the better, providing the centers are all true in color and free from any mousing whatever. The edging should be a rich glossy black with the beetle-green sheen. Such distinct markings are necessary to the production of the Sebright lacing. Matings of this kind are apt to produce many specimens which will be too light for any use other than table poultry. At the same time some beautiful specimens will result as part of their offspring.

The above mating should produce by far the best females, but the markings are rather too light for the production of males. The male

described above when mated to females whose plumage is about equally divided in color—not more than one-half white, but pure, true, and rich in color—will produce far better males than females. Both styles of female can be mated with the same male and assure the production of males and females of good quality from the one pen. Although some continue the use of females that have so little white centering in plumage as to look like a spot or stripe on the feather, the use of these should be considered a waste of time. Not one open-laced specimen of good quality can be produced from this kind. It is well to bear in mind the necessity of having more black lacing on the breast plumage of male than female; but to secure good results, about an equal division of color is best.

These matings are all on the side of the lighter shade and narrow lacing, and will produce quite a percentage of young that are too light for practical purposes—a result that seldom comes, because the majority of all matings are so very dark as to produce the larger percentage of young too dark for show purposes. It is quite easy to mate the darker ones together and have them as dark in color as could be wished. This gives one the choice of mating according to fancy, with full assurance of desirable results from the light, medium, or dark matings.

THE GOLDEN-LACED WYANDOTTE.

The Golden Wyandotte was the second variety of this breed that was brought before the public. The most successful attempt at its production was made by Joseph McKeen, of Omro, Wis., who first produced a fowl which he called “Winnebagoes,” that being the name of his farm. These Winnebagoes were the result of crossing Rose-Combed Brown Leghorns, Pea-Combed Partridge Cochins, and some buff females, these latter the result of a Golden Sebright-Buff Cochin cross. The best males produced from the combination of these several breeds were mated with some American Sebright females. Thus was produced the foundation of one of the most valuable strains—possibly the most valuable.

Some breeders, aiming for the same results, united the blood of the Golden Spangled Hamburg and the Partridge Cochin and crossed this product with the American Sebright. None of these crosses were as successful as those made by Mr. McKeen; but, as with the Silver-Laced Wyandotte, the careful selection of the best and their proper union gave the start of what has proved to be a valuable addition to the Wyandotte family, which is now so highly respected the world over.

Here again we have the double Asiatic cross of the Partridge and Buff Cochin with the Sebright Bantam. In this instance the Golden Sebright was crossed with the Buff Cochin and the product united with the rich black-red colors of the Partridge Cochin and Brown Leg-



GOLDEN LACED WYANDOTTE MALE.



GOLDEN LACED WYANDOTTE FEMALE.

horn. The rich-colored males from this combination of blood were bred to selected females of the American Sebright breed (now Silver-Laced Wyandottes). Almost the same identical combination of blood produced the Silver. It originated from the silvery white of the Dark Brahma and Silver Sebright, as mentioned before, while the top cross for the Golden came from the Golden Sebright and the black-red colors of the Brown Leghorn-Partridge Cochin union. Great patience and care were necessary for the completion of this variety, not so much to insure good Wyandotte form (this came as naturally to them as to the Silvers), but to establish the true golden-bay color to conform to the white of the Silver and at the same time gain the deep rich top color of the Partridge Cochin for the male.

THE COLOR OF THE GOLDEN.

The influence of the buff color of the females employed for the top cross, also the white color of the American Sebright females, was a very pale shade of golden bay for the males and yellow centers for the females. This color has been improved to the extent that we now have a deep golden bay for the top color of males and yellow bay for the females and under portion of males. The tendency is toward a deeper and more brilliant color in both, and for a top color on males of almost as rich colors as that of the Partridge Cochin. Gradually these colors have been deepened until the present rich shades of the finer specimens are quite in contrast with the old-time yellow shades.

Our present Standard specifies that the color of the Golden male and female shall be the same as that of the Silver Wyandottes, except that "golden bay" should be substituted for "white." This substitution of golden bay for white falls short of describing the rich top color of the Golden-Laced male, which now rivals the Brown Leghorn in brilliancy of color and richness of striping. This bright rich color is not in accord with the Standard, which calls for a deep golden bay for top color. A golden bay is not a bright, nor is it a deep, red; it is simply a golden-tinted bay. Everyone is familiar with the bay color as applied to a horse, which is a red bay; but the color demanded for the Golden-Laced Wyandotte is golden bay; or, as described by some, a mixture of pure gold and red.

The striping of hackle and saddle plumage must be the same in the Golden as in the Silver—the same diamond center in saddle and the same open lacing on both male and female. All conditions of marking, lacing, and striping must be the same in both. It adds much to the beauty of the Golden if the Sebright lacing is obtained. Many specimens are seen at the present time which have the very open center of rich golden bay edged about with metallic black that glistens, forming a most beautiful combination of colors.

The gradual changes from the narrow stripe, or center, to the open lacing have modified the methods of mating to such an extent that some adopt double matings to produce show specimens. It is claimed that, to insure good females, it is undesirable to use males having the open lacing on the breast. Such matings yield females having too much white. To secure good females, it is best to employ males having at least one-half black on the breast plumage and females having good open lacing. In some cases those very gay or open-laced specimens will produce solid white chicks.

For all ordinary purposes it is best to mate for medium centers, using females that have the larger portion of their plumage very open laced and males having rather dark breast plumage and good clear top color. It is much better to confine yards to one pair, trio, or pen rather than try to produce nicely marked stock from a male with bad top color. Depend upon this fact, that if the male has bad top color, the same will be found on his chicks as they grow up. Too many males having black edging on back and saddle plumage (a defect that has been bred into them for many years) are used. This black edging is not nearly so prevalent in the Golden as in the Silver Wyandotte. More attention has been paid to the former, and this has driven out the mossaing in back plumage of females and given to the Golden a more even surface color. As a whole, the Golden is much better in surface color than the Silver. To succeed in improving the Silvers, good silvery males having clear silvery white top color, free from black edging, and saddle plumage having white centers must be employed; otherwise too many females will have mossaing on the back.

TO PRODUCE THE GOLDEN COLOR.

In selecting a Golden Laced male for a producer, choose one having the golden bay color—not a reddish bay nor a chestnut color, but a golden shade of bay. Keep clear of light or yellow shading on breast and dark shadings on back or wings. By all means have good, clear hackle plumage, nicely striped with black and free from smut. Many are too deep a bay or red; some are as rich in color as a Partridge Cochins. This is not as the Standard reads. It calls for a golden bay; not even a rich golden bay is demanded.

The same conditions govern the Golden as govern the Silver. Very open-laced specimens will produce offspring which grades lighter in color than the parent birds. The medium-colored specimens will produce the medium shades; the very dark specimens will produce the darkest chicks. This makes it possible to mate the Golden in the same manner as given above for the Silver with about the same results. In all matings use only those specimens that have the true golden bay color laced with the rich, glossy black that glistens with a beetle-green sheen.

It is claimed that one of the very best plans for mating is to select a perfect male in form and color and place with him females, some of which are light and some dark in color, in order to gain the advantage of both shades in the one mating. Of one result there is the greatest assurance, namely, the loss of the proper color, unless the strictest attention is paid to its maintenance by using only such males as possess the true shade and the rich black lacing. In all matings the breast plumage of the male should be darker and heavier in lacing than the females. This applies to both the Silver and Golden varieties.

A very safe plan of mating is to select both males and females with the medium centers and mate them, year after year, until this line of breeding is established in the strain. Such matings will produce both sexes of fairly good quality and a greater percentage of good salable birds than may be expected from the other more extreme matings. All these matings may be used in both varieties; the more extreme mating to produce the light open-laced Sebright markings, the medium colors for the average quality of exhibition specimens usually seen.

THE WHITE WYANDOTTE.

The white variety of Wyandottes originated as sports from the Silver-Laced. It is claimed that some of them appeared as early as 1872. If this is true, those of that early date had not much of quality in their ancestors. Early writers speak of them as better in Wyandotte shape than the Silvers, and regard them as models for all varieties. Much of this distinction, it is presumed, was the outcome of applause arising from the pleasure of adding a new variety to the list of American fowls.

When it is considered that as late as 1883 the Silver-Laced Wyandottes gained only quality of sufficient amount to establish them as a Standard breed, what must they have been in 1872, at which time it is claimed that the white sports were produced? The statement is not questioned that they did produce both solid black chicks, also solid white ones, for this is known to be the fact. At the same time the quality of these self-colored sports was no better than the parent birds from which they came as sports. The strong-breed characteristics of the whites, when present, is the result of careful mating and the influence of Asiatic alliance.

We are informed that an exhibition Silver-Laced male of merit (from England) mated to some of the very best American-bred females has in the past two seasons produced some beautiful-shaped White Wyandottes. This continued production of white chicks from Silver-Laced Wyandottes has existed from the very incipency of the breed to the present time. Such a large production of solid-white chicks throughout the period of twenty-eight years points to a reversionary, rather than to a sporting, condition. Or, in other words, it leads to

the opinion that they "throw back" to white ancestry rather than show a tendency to sport or produce albinos.

THEIR ORIGIN.

The credit of their origin is given to George W. Towle, of Truxton, N. Y., and B. M. Briggs, of Wyandale, N. Y., both of whom did much for their advancement. If our information is correct, it was not until 1885 that the White Wyandotte was brought prominently before the public; and its admission to the Standard, in 1888, was accomplished at the meeting of the American Poultry Association held at Indianapolis in that year. Prior to 1892 there had not been produced any considerable number which attracted attention in quality of shape or color. During the years intervening between 1878 and 1885 white chicks came too often from the Silver-Laced variety. Their breeders considered it as positive proof of impurity in the breeding stock. Efforts were made to shield the fact until it became known that they would be advanced as a true variety of the Wyandotte family; then many willingly acknowledged the presence of the Silver-Laced in their yards. Few varieties of fowls in this country have ever been as well managed as these have been. Both utility and exhibition qualities have been fostered equally. The result is greatly in their favor and makes them one of the strongest, if not the strongest, competitor of the Barred Plymouth Rock for public favor.

AN EXHIBITION FOWL.

In the history of American poultry exhibitions there has not been recorded a more popular fowl than the White Wyandotte. It has gained so fast in this direction as to call together the largest classes at our fall and winter shows. Large sums are continually subscribed by those who are interested in their welfare for special awards in these classes, thus creating an unusual interest in them, and rendering them more and more popular. They have met with but one obstacle as they have gone forward, and that is the new Buff variety.

Great improvement has been made in their shape and color. Almost perfection of shape and immaculate plumage must be present with the specimen that now wins the honors. Medium quality has but little chance in the show pen in well-contested classes, and poor condition of feather is almost certain to bring defeat. No fowl is more beautiful or attractive than a pure-white one in prime condition of plumage. Feathers of such purity rest most gracefully upon the White Wyandotte.

UTILITY QUALITIES.

The White Wyandotte is without question the model for market poultry. The compact form and full plump breast give the desired



WHITE WYANDOTTE MALE.



WHITE WYANDOTTE FEMALE.

broiler as well as the most perfect roaster. The color of the meat and skin is of that attractive yellow so much in demand in our markets. It has the combination of attractive shape and color, and the white plumage removes all chance of prejudice so often advanced against dark pin feathers, thus giving it three very important advantages for sale as market poultry.

There is but one drawback to contend with in pushing the White Wyandotte for a more advanced position as a utility fowl, namely, its inclination to produce eggs that average undersize when compared with the size of the fowl. In the markets that bring the highest prices for eggs the larger in size are the most valued. The White Wyandottes lay quite as many eggs as are laid by the Plymouth Rocks or by other varieties of Wyandottes, and their eggs are of good color and firm in shell. They are quite as economically kept as any breed, with an inclination to accumulate fat with age, which counts in their favor when sold for market fowls.

THE QUESTION OF SIZE.

There seems to be a rule governing form which confines its greatest perfection within certain sizes. Undersize in the Bantam deprives it of the highest form. As oversize in the Brahma detracts from its grace of contour, this same influence works against an effort to advance the size of the White Wyandotte beyond the limit of the rule governing the individual form. Bad shape has come with these mistaken efforts, and this should be a warning against a continuance. It is well to guide them in size within that limit line which gives assurance of a maintenance of the best breed characteristics, but not to go beyond. Hold to their beautiful form by all means; that is their real attractiveness and value. Do not try to gain size, which can not prove of value as against the loss of form.

We have the greater size in our Asiatic fowls. A large Wyandotte can not excel a larger Brahma as a meat fowl, while as a Wyandotte of proper proportions it may meet with greater favor. The White Wyandotte, as it should be, has as much size as is consistent with its position as a general-utility fowl. The grace of form and exhibition qualities can be maintained within these conditions as to size. Both the Brahma and the White Wyandotte can be improved within the limits of the rule which controls form as against size, and both may be injured in an effort to go beyond these limits.

HOW TO MATE THEM.

To produce White Wyandottes for exhibition, we must look simply for perfection of form and purity of color, with good head points. The male should be a model of Wyandotte shape, clothed in absolutely white plumage that is true and pure in color to the skin, including the

quills; head and comb in strict conformity with Standard demands. The females should be superb in all sections in both shape and color. No hope of success can be placed on inferior breeding stock when the aim is to produce winners of the highest character.

The following special points of value may be considered to advantage: Do not use White Wyandotte females that have narrow, contracted main tail feathers to produce winners, although this is permissible with the Plymouth Rock. Have the well-spread tail on all Wyandotte females used for breeding exhibition stock. Such matings are of the very highest character, and, while they are difficult to secure, they are almost certain to give returns that will fully repay for the necessary trouble and expense.

When such quality is not obtainable, the following methods involved in building up a strain should be pursued: Select the very best at hand year after year until some are produced that are equal to the best, and from these hope may be gained for a reputation in the showroom. In any class where the competition is as keen as in the White Wyandotte specimens are always met in competition from the yards of the most successful producers, thus making it of the utmost importance to select as breeding stock specimens of the highest merit for breeding winners.

Other features of great importance are purity of color of ear lobes, beak, and shanks, including the feet. White ear lobes and shanks other than yellow are disqualifications not removable. The presence of either is prominent and should be avoided. It is equally important that there should not be the slightest trace of feathers or down upon the shanks or between the toes of any breeding stock. The absolute avoidance of this will alone assure against its future appearance, and it should be guarded against with the greatest care.

WHITE AS A COLOR.

Pure white as a color of plumage of fowls is quite as difficult to maintain as any other color or parti-colors. A cream or yellow or black tinge must continually be contended against; any one or all of these colors may crop out when least expected. The most perfect white shade is apt to be sprinkled with black, and the yellow undercolor must be fought against unceasingly. The surest means of obliterating these undesirable tinges is by the selection of males that have absolutely white plumage, including undercolor and the quills, or shafts, of the feathers.

Many of the most attractive and vigorous male White Wyandottes show a tendency toward the yellowish tinge in plumage, but their other attractive qualities are inducements to use them as breeding specimens, the result often being disappointing. It is better to discard them than to run the risk of infusing the taint of yellow into the flock. Equal care should be given to the selection of white females.

THE BLACK WYANDOTTE.

The Black Wyandotte originated in the yards of F. M. Clements, jr., of Mechanicsburg, Ohio, in 1885. It came as a sport from the Silver Wyandottes. The first Black Wyandottes possessed by him were a few black pullets, which he mated with a male having black body plumage and a silver hackle. From this start he built up a true breeding strain of blacks, which are credited with being the foundation of those we now have. The care bestowed upon them by Mr. Clements brought the Black Wyandotte to a condition of good reproducing power, and they could be depended upon to produce solid black plumage with good dark undercolor, red ear lobes, dark shanks, and correct style and shape of comb.

Good size was also present in these early Black Wyandottes, and the color was improved by Mr. Clements into a rich glossy black, giving them a good start in the right direction. Breeders who thought it best to have the same yellow shanks and feet as other Wyandottes did much to injure this variety for several years. It was finally settled that it was impossible to have the yellow shanks and feet with good black surface and undercolor. This information, gained by bitter experience, resulted in establishing the original dark color for beak, shanks, and feet.

It is quite unnatural for black fowls (or birds of any kind) to have other than dark or black legs and feet. When any other color is present, it is an unnatural condition, brought about by artificial methods, which demands undue care in their reproduction to prevent undesirable colors coming into the plumage. Careful consideration of these facts guided the framing of the Standard description for this new variety, which is: Black shaded with yellow as the color for beak, shanks, and feet, at the same time demanding that the bottom of feet shall be yellow, and making the absence of this yellow a disqualification.

Time has proved the possibility of producing both good shape and color under these Standard requirements. Within the last few years some beautiful-colored specimens of excellent Wyandotte qualities have been shown, some of them fully the equal of any of the other varieties. But American prejudice against black fowls has barred the way of the Black Wyandottes to much-deserved popularity. The same influence has counted against all other black fowls, many of which have qualities that rival any or all other breeds. Much of this feeling has been removed within the last ten years, and it may be that a better appreciation is in the future for all fowls of this color.

MATING FOR COLOR.

The position filled by the Black Wyandotte is quite that of "the fanciers' fowl." While it is fully the equal of the other varieties in

utility requirements, it has never been urged with the same vigor for public popularity. It can hardly be expected that it will gain equal prominence with the Whites, handicapped as it is with a less popular color. At the same time persistent effort in its behalf would make it equally popular with the Langshans or Minorcas.

In all matings of Black Wyandottes better shape and breed qualities of all kinds should be present, if possible, than can be usually obtained in other varieties. It is quite necessary to have the most perfect shape, else they are of but little value. It would be better not to attempt their production for profit unless most excellent specimens can be had to breed from. The fact that they are a "fancier's fowl" means that all that are not fully equal to Standard requirements are to be relegated as table poultry.

For best results mate the richest-colored male with the purest black females that have but little gloss, or sheen, in their plumage. They will produce the better-colored males; while the very rich-colored females, glistening with the metallic sheen, will produce the best-colored pullets if mated to this same rich-colored male. Many of the cockerels from these rich-colored females will have an excess of color, which disqualifies them. Those that have the proper finish, or shade of color, will be rich and glossy in the extreme, but the more somber-colored females must be depended upon for the exhibition males.

Always select good, dark undercolor and dark legs, as they give assurance of an established color in the blood, while the light, or willow-colored, legs and the pale undercolor bespeak the influence of the lighter shade of the ancestors, the influence of which is detrimental. Good, strong black, through and through, including undercolor and quills of feathers, is the best assurance against white in the offspring. All these features of color must be closely watched if we hope to succeed in producing Black Wyandottes of highest quality.

THE BUFF WYANDOTTE.

There has been considerable contention about the question of priority of production of this variety. From all information at hand the indications are in favor of George H. Brackenbury, of Auburn, N. Y., as the pioneer, with Dr. Aldridge and R. G. Buffington, of Fall River, Mass., close seconds. These two distinct lines were produced under different methods. One was formed from Wyandotte-Buff Cochin cross; the other came through the Rhode Island Red-Wyandotte cross. Other strains came from different crosses—all aiming for the same end, but each using a separate rule of procedure.

The New York strain of Buff Wyandottes was produced from the union of Wyandotte males and Buff Cochin females. This strain was largely Cochin in blood and form, in color of wings and tail, and in surface color, and is the best of any of the early productions. The



BUFF WYANDOTTE MALE.



BUFF WYANDOTTE FEMALE.

amalgamation of this and the other strains improved them all and gave them the start toward their present perfection of form and color. The Buff Wyandotte is nearer related to the Asiatic family than any of the older Wyandotte varieties, as the latter were crossed again upon the Cochin to gain the desired color. The original Fall River strain (so called) came as the result of an unguided cross of Silver-Laced Wyandottes and Rhode Island Reds. The Rhode Island Red, a cross-bred farm fowl, in union with the Wyandottes, which were placed among the Reds to advance their value as market poultry, gave a product that was molded into the proper form and color for the Buff Wyandotte. The Rhode Island Red was largely descended from the early Asiatics, and thus gave renewed strength to these later blood lines, and adding to, rather than detracting from, the tendency toward Asiatic form. This strain was badly handicapped with black in tail and wings, an inheritance from both ancestors. The union of these two strains gave strength of character and better color. The original formation of each seemed to blend with the other, giving little resistance to the hand that was guiding them to a more perfect condition.

The third strain came from the union of buff-laced females of very little lacing (which came as sports from the Golden-Laced variety) with a male from the Fall River strain. These three lines of breeding have furnished the foundation of this most excellent variety.

While in quest of better color the shape and size have been neglected to a considerable extent. The fact that there are many specimens of good form and color that are oversize is positive proof that size, shape, and color can all be maintained without injury to either characteristic. It seems to be a necessity to breed closely in line to establish and maintain good color and breed characteristics. While this is true, it does not establish the necessity of selecting inferior size and shape as one of the requirements. Shape must be considered at all times as of first importance; size should be of almost equal consideration with color; and never should color stand paramount to both.

SELECTING FOR BREEDING.

The proper selection of Buff Wyandottes to be used for producing exhibition specimens of merit is a difficult task. First of all, the possibility of perpetuating disqualifications—such as white earlobes, bad combs, and poor-colored shanks and feet—is to be guarded against. Eyes should be prominently bright and clear and of a good bay color; shanks and feet a good yellow color, very smooth and free from any semblance of either feathers or down; comb and all head points should be almost perfection in form and texture.

It is worse than folly to hope to obtain good Wyandotte shape from ill-formed parents. Discard as breeders all faulty specimens and continue to use only the best, for in this way only can excellence be

obtained. Good size and vigor are of the greatest importance. Without these, little prospect of advancement can be had. It is hardly necessary to again mention the fact that all varieties must have the same breed shape. This is doubly true of the solid-colored varieties. The one solid color and the shape are the only necessities for perfection; but the demand for excellence is by far more rigid against solid color than parti-colored fowls.

Equally as much care must be given to the selection of the females as to the males. Each must have the greatest amount of quality obtainable. Good form, good size, and constitutional vigor are quite valuable in the female as well as in the male. It is the female that casts the greater influence over size and form. Good color is an absolute necessity in the male, as he imparts the greater influence over color. All these features should have careful consideration when selecting breeding stock.

TO PRODUCE BUFF COLOR.

It is safe to presume that there is no color of a fowl so hard to produce and maintain as the buff color. There is but one true buff color. Lemon shade is not buff; a red or cinnamon color is not buff; neither is a reddish brown a buff; the true shade is "golden buff." The term used for Standard buff color is "one even shade of rich, golden buff, free from shafting or mealy appearance." This is simply a true rich buff of golden hue. Many produce a thin, uneven shade of lemon yellow and call it buff, while others favor a deep orange buff or cinnamon color and present it as the true shade for buff. These are not the true golden buff.

The proper shade of buff, many say, is a mixture of yellow, red, and white, or a combination of yellow and pink. This is absolutely true when mixing colors on the palette, but many years of experience have proved that it is far more difficult to control the color of plumage than to properly mix the paints. It is easy to say: Keep out the black or drive out the white. But it appears when least expected. Buff is a made color—it is not a natural color—and there is but one rule for its certain production, and that is the union of the truest color possible to obtain, year after year, until a strain is established that will breed true to color.

A continued system of inbreeding for good, sound plumage color has many drawbacks. Reduction of size and loss of form are the most serious. To obviate this, new blood must be introduced from time to time, the admission of which brings with it more or less disturbance of color lines, causing a continual oscillation between good color and good form. One of the principal assurances of good color is the proper undercolor and color of shafting or quills—all of which should be buff to the skin and of a shade somewhat lighter than surface color. What-

ever the shade or buff may be, let it be even and true all over and through and through.

It is not advisable to mate light and dark specimens; the result will be a mealiness in plumage of chicks. The very best selection is of females having the true golden buff, and of males whose breast color is one or two shades darker than the females, all to be very even in color and free from any shade other than the buff. Black and white should be avoided. If white is present, it is quite likely to show in undercolor and on wings of the offspring. Black will show in the wings and tail. Both are equally objectionable.

PENCILED WYANDOTTES.

Having forced themselves into distinguishing classes, the Silver and Golden Wyandottes are known as the Silver-Laced and Golden-Laced varieties, from the fact that their plumage has an edging of black about each feather which is known as lacing. Two varieties are now demanding recognition that have penciled plumage.

If proper uniformity in the Standard is to be maintained the line should be drawn between the laced and penciled varieties. All laced varieties should be grouped under one head and the penciled varieties under another head. This would form a guide for uniformity in the Standard, and cover all varieties that now or hereafter seek admission. We have the buff laced, as well as others yet unnamed, that are gaining in quality each year. These should have provision made for them in advance, so that a uniformity of standard may be observed in their construction.

GOLDEN-PENCILED, OR PARTRIDGE, WYANDOTTE.

This, the first penciled Wyandotte, is the result of crosses made in 1889 by George H. Brackenbury, of Auburn, N. Y., who used a Golden Wyandotte male and a Pea-Combed Partridge Cochins female for his start. About the same time Joseph McKeen, of Omro, Wis., and his coworker, E. O. Thiem, began working for the same result, using Golden Wyandotte and Partridge Cochins crosses. These three men should have the credit of the origin of the Golden-Penciled Wyandotte. Future results only will prove who are the most competent in the advancement of this strain. Every time a new variety is produced contention arises as to whom the credit of their origin should be accorded. If better records of time and matings were kept they would be proof in the case.

This new Wyandotte has, or should have, the same color and markings in all sections as the Partridge Cochins fowl. In size, shape, and comb it must conform to the Standard demands for all Wyandottes. It should be a Wyandotte of perfect form, clothed in the beautiful plumage of the Partridge Cochins.

The production of good color and markings for this new variety is not an easy task. The color demanded for the Partridge Cochin makes it almost impossible to produce good exhibition males and females from the same matings. As the new Wyandotte advances in quality the same difficulties will confront it that confronted the Cochin, and the same methods must be applied as are now used to produce the exhibition Cochin, unless some of those who are engaged in the improvement of the Penciled Wyandotte devise a plan of mating that will produce males and females of equal quality from the single

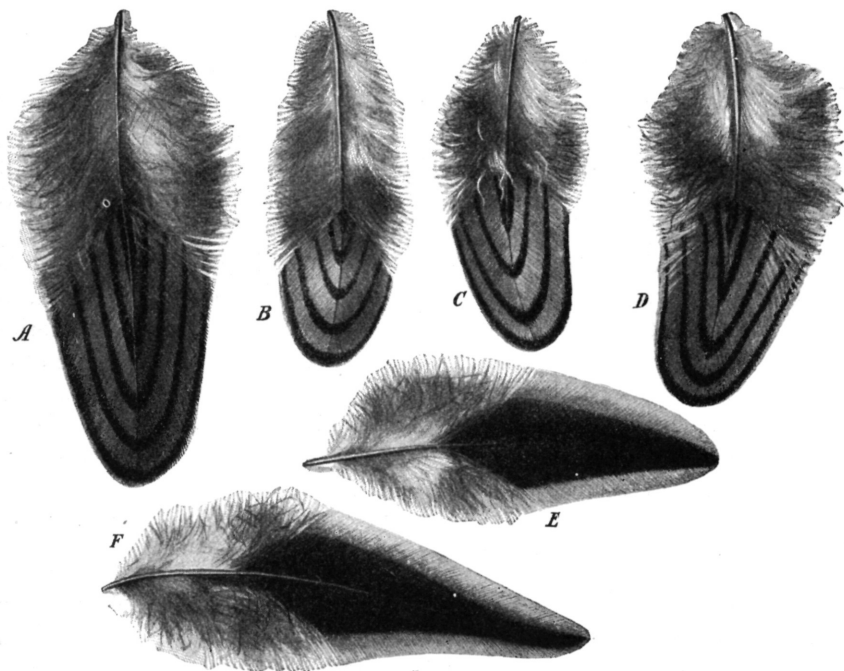


FIG. 3.—Feathers of Partridge Wyandotte. *A*, fluff, female; *B*, breast, female; *C*, wing, female; *D*, cape, female; *E*, hackle, female; *F*, hackle, male.

mating. Until the Standard for this variety is formed and accepted it can be considered only under the description published by the originators.

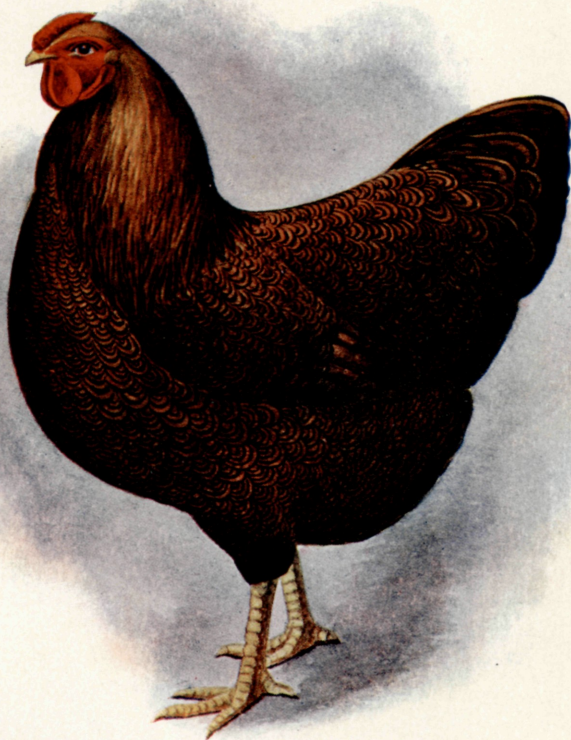
NOTE.—Since the above was written this variety of Wyandottes has been admitted to the Standard under the name of Partridge Wyandotte. This was done at the meeting of the American Poultry Association, at Chicago, on January 23, 1901. The Standard description of the variety demands that they have the true Wyandotte shape, while the color is the same as for Partridge Cochins.

SILVER-PENCILED WYANDOTTE.

This variety also originated with Mr. Brackenbury. It is the result of a Wyandotte-Dark Brahma cross. They are true Wyandottes, and



GOLDEN PENCILED WYANDOTTE MALE.



GOLDEN PENCILLED WYANDOTTE FEMALE.

have the color and markings of the Dark Brahma; the top color of the male, silvery white; hackle and saddle striped with black; breast and undercolor of body a beautiful rich glossy black; beak and shanks yellow. The female is a beautiful clear gray, nicely penciled with the darker color. This variety promises to be one of our most beautiful fowls. The attractiveness of color and markings add greatly to the admirable Wyandotte form.

It is to be hoped that the bad color of the back, so prevalent in the Silver-Laced, will not be present with this new variety, as their beauty depends so largely upon clearness of plumage, which can be easily marred by the presence of the reddish brown cast too often seen in the Silver-Laced males. The efforts of their champions to breed both these penciled varieties with yellow shanks will no doubt retard them somewhat, as it did the blacks. They should at least have as much latitude for color as the Cochin and Brahma, from which they are derived.

Both the Silver-Penciled and the Golden-Penciled are clear in color and beautifully penciled. In the former the black and white are well defined. The striping of hackle and saddle in each is very prominent and true, while the penciling and color of some of the Golden females are almost the equal of that of the Partridge Cochin.

THE BUFF-LACED WYANDOTTE.

The Buff-Laced variety has the true buff center and the white lacing, or edging, on plumage, exactly like the Buff-Laced Polish. They came as the result of some of the many crosses made to establish other varieties. In order that the readers may know more of the matings and crosses of this variety, there are given below the exact words of one who helped in originating it: "From a combination of blood, made from a Golden Wyandotte-Buff Cochin cross, mated to White Wyandotte-Buff Cochin cross-breds, a cockerel sported having the two colors of the Buff-Laced birds. His breast, fluff, and wing bars were laced with white as perfectly as any laced Wyandotte male I ever saw. His wing bows and all the centers of his entire plumage were of the same deep red-bay color. The white lacing was as white as is seen in any white variety. This buff-laced male was bred to a pen of the blue-laced females, to lighten the color of the lacing. From this was obtained one beautiful pullet from which was developed this variety." From these many crosses other colors also made their appearance, as mentioned above; for instance, the blue-laced females, which are sometimes called violet laced. Other crosses produced the Buff-Laced variety, as follows: By crossing Golden-Laced and White Wyandottes, and remating the best results of these matings, the foundation of one of the most successful strains was laid. Another came as a by-product from an attempt to produce blue lacing upon a

golden colored Wyandotte. Some specimens came with the golden centers and white lacing, giving the foundation for one of the best-known strains of the world. All these many crosses brought the same final result, namely, showing the possibilities of manipulating the shades of color and their numerous markings.

A reasonably perfect specimen of this variety is a most beautiful fowl. The center of the plumage should be a rich golden buff nicely laced about with white. Thus far but a limited number has been produced which has the desirable qualities.

THE UNNAMED VARIETIES OF WYANDOTTES.

The most prominent of the unnamed varieties is a fowl of a Wyandotte shape having the color and marking of the Light Brahma. It is known as the Columbia Wyandotte. Its style of color and marking has not so far attracted public attention. Great improvement has been made in the variety within the last two years, and its general make-up in form and color could be directed into a most beautiful specimen of the Wyandotte family. Evidently these fowls originated from a White Wyandotte-Light Brahma cross. The rich yellow of beak and shanks will come very naturally to them, and the striping of hackle, when it becomes equal to the same section of the highly colored Brahma, will be of attractive contrast with their white bodies.

The Violette, or Violet-Laced Wyandotte, is of the same shade and color as the Golden-Laced, except that it has the blue instead of the black. When this lacing is of a rich violet blue the coloring is attractive. This variety was produced by crossing and recrossing the Wyandotte varieties and selecting the best. Much trouble is always experienced in attempting to hold these colors true. In fact they are Wyandottes of a much too delicate color formation to be other than an extremely fancy fowl.

Cuckoo Wyandotte.—In England they have a Wyandotte of the same color as our Barred Plymouth Rocks which they call Cuckoo Wyandottes. So far they have gained but little prominence in their own country, and none have been seen in this excepting those often shown in our American Dominique classes. They favor our Wyandottes too much both in form and color. In addition to this, the long flowing tail of the properly constructed Dominique is, in too many cases, misplaced by the Wyandotte form of tail.

Some other colors.—If the Pile-colored Wyandotte could be produced in as delicate tints as the Pile Game, it would add another variety to the truly fancy Wyandotte list. Among the newest is a fowl of Wyandotte shape, with broken black-and-white plumage, like the Ancora or Houdan. This fowl is presumed to be related to the Erminetts, a fowl of much the same character that has been bred in New England for years.